

Thorn Building (Irving's Camera Shop)
417 Seventh Street, NW
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-471

HABS
DC,
WASH,
358-

PHOTOGRAPH

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

STATE District of Columbia		COUNTY	TOWN OR VICINITY Washington
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) THORN BUILDING - Original owner as stated in Corporation of Washington. Tax Records for 1855.			HABS NO. DC-471
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Irving's Camera Shop			
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 417 Seventh Street, NW, Sq. 457, Lot 820 USGS Washington West Quadrangle, UTM Coordinates: 18.325367 4306962			
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE). 1855 - Assessment of Real & Personal Tax, Corporation of Washington - Property for the Year 1855; p. 172.		ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Unknown	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) This 4 story building, located in what was once Washington's primary business district, is an early example of commercial Washington architecture. It is a much simplified version of the Romano Tuscan style, one of the many revival styles being made popular at that time. During its history it has housed a number of business concerns (see attached sheet #			
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Renaissance Revival: Romano Tuscan Mode			
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Brick bearing, party walls; front (west) facade faced with ashlar brownstone; internal wood framing, steel I-beam parallel to party walls supports second floor (see attached sheet #1)			
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE). Rectangular - approx. 25' x 115'; 4 Stories - approx. 56' high			
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE Three window bays; second floor windows altered--center window widened, wide, flat stucco frame unifies the three windows, third and fourth floor windows have simple, projecting frames and sills with simple block corbels supporting sills; modern projecting storefront, portion of 1906 pressed sheet metal storefront exists around (see attached sheet #1)			
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) Four floors - each a single open space; north party wall of second and fourth floors pierced with doors into Independent Order of Odd Fellows building next door; straight run, enclosed stair with landings at each floor adjacent to south party wall, a second stair connects second and third floors midway through building along (see attached sheet #1)			
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES Storefront Repairs, install show window - Permit #841, 9/26/1886; Show Window - Permit #666-1/2, 5/28/1906 Install 2'-6" I-Beams - Permit #956, 9/21/1906 (see attached sheet #1)			
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE POOR - Currently undergoing stabilization procedures prior to planned restoration process.			
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE As part of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation's redevelopment plans for this area the Seventh Street facade and party walls are to be dismantled for eventual reerection on the same site as part of the Gallery Row Adaptive Re-Use Plan (see attached sheet #1)			
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDE LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Proposed Storefront Design and Condition Survey, gallery Row, for Hartman-Cox, by Building Conservation Technology, September 27, 1979 Misc. Notes and Papers - Building Conservation Technology, 1555 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, D. C.			
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Janet N. Shure, Bethanie C. Grashof - Anderson Notter/Mariani for The Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation.			DATE October 29, 1980

THORN BUILDING (Irving's Camera Shop)
417 Seventh Street, N. W., Sq. 457, Lot 820
Washington, D. C.

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SIGNIFICANCE (cont.)

including a paper and window shade hanger, a house sign and decorative painting operation, as well as a series of grocers and furniture stores.

MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (cont.)

joists in rear half of building, shallower steel beams perpendicular to l-Beam, also at rear of building.

EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (cont.)

stair entry at extreme right of facade; projecting denticulated, wood cornice supported by four simple consoles.

INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (cont.)

north party wall; original pressed tin ceilings on first and second floors.

MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES (cont.)

General alterations, show windows - Permit #2788, 4/19/1918
Storefront, step to second floor - Permit #183443, 8/13/1935
Show Window - Permit #183653, 8/20/1935
Repair ceilings with plaster - Permit #285312, 5/10/1936

SOURCES OF INFORMATION (cont.)

Drawings for Adaptive Reuse: Hartman-Cox, 1071 Thomas Jefferson Pl., NW,
Washington, D. C.
Building Permits - National Archives
District of Columbia Directories 1850-1970, Martin Luther King Memorial Library,
Washington, D. C.
Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King Memorial Library,
Washington, D.C.

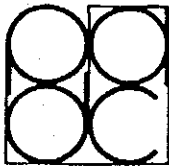
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PENNSYLVANIA
AVENUE
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION

425 13TH STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

GENERAL CONSULTANTS

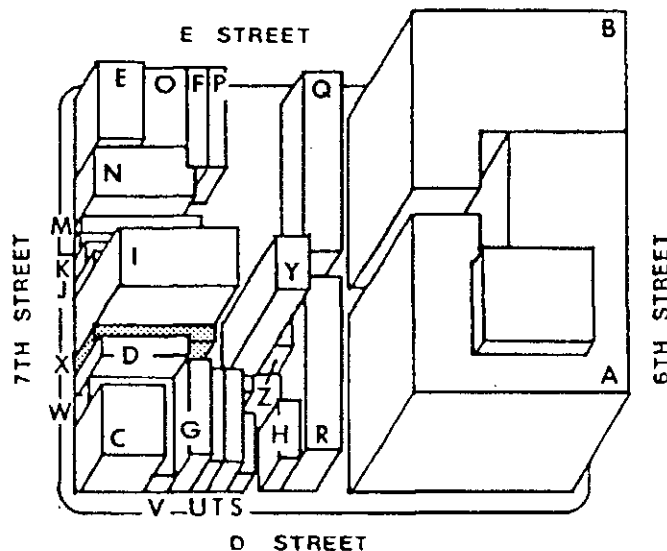
ANDERSON NOTTER/MARIANI
GENERAL PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT
DEVROUX & PURNELL
ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS
DAVID MCLAREN HART & ASSOCIATES
PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT
MONK DUNSTONE ASSOCIATES
COST ESTIMATING CONSULTANT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

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Thorn Building (Irving's Camera Shop)
417 Seventh St., NW
Lot 820



This documentation was produced for mitigation purposes by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. Additional documentation exists for Square 457, within which this structure stands. For photographs, historical, and descriptive data on Square 457, see HABS No. DC-597.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This mid-Nineteenth Century commercial structure, occupying a site in the midst of the east side of the 400 block of Seventh Street, fills its available street frontage. Its facade is flush with its contiguous neighbors, a taller four-story structure to the south, and the eight-story Odd Fellows building to the north. The three-bay, four-story structure, which measures approximately twenty-five feet in width and one hundred feet in depth, is clad in a white-painted dressed brownstone ashlar. Set against this plain facade are trabeated windows suggestive of Renaissance detail and a simple denticulated wood cornice supported on four simplified consoles. The second floor windows were altered in this century; the central window was greatly widened and the three-bay grouping unified through a wide, flat stucco frame. The modern projecting storefront, which had two semi-octagonal (in plan) show windows, is badly decayed. Part of an earlier pressed sheet metal storefront, suggestive of traditional moldings, remains around the stair entry.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

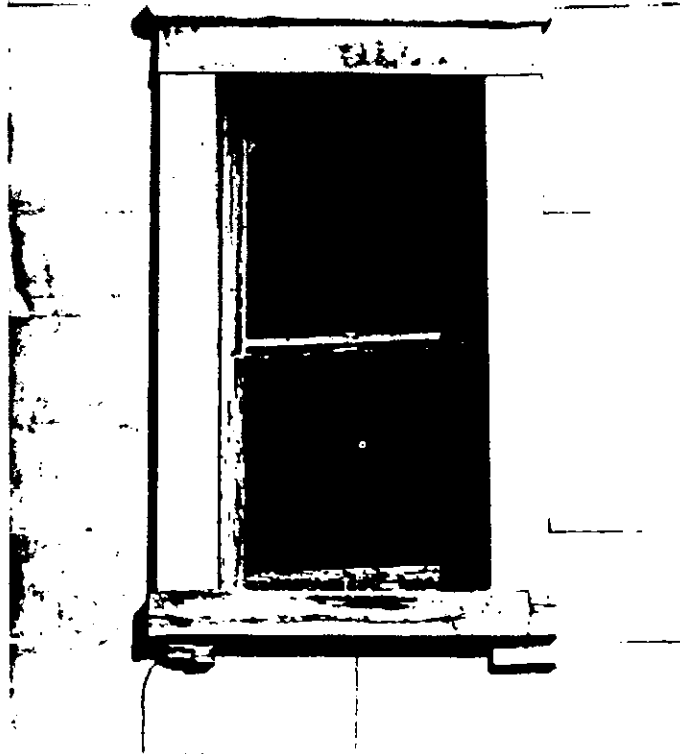
Built in 1855, this building shows the influence of the Renaissance Revival of the mid-Nineteenth Century. Its simplicity, elegant proportions, smooth ashlar walls, trabeated windows and deep bracketed cornice are hallmarks of the style. However, the details are simplified almost to the point of crudeness; though the overall forms evoke their Renaissance models, almost all classical detail is missing. For example, in those models the window surround is usually molded, with a molded sill supported by corbels that are detailed as consoles. In this case, though the width of the surround is appropriate, it is flat and unadorned. The projection of the sill, normally detailed as a simple cornice, is suggested only by a greater thickness of the block. Corbels are simple, rectangular blocks. The overall effect is pleasant nonetheless. Its restrained simplicity stands in marked contrast to the exuberant ornamentation of its Victorian neighbor to the south.

September 1979

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SEVENTH STREET (WEST)
FACADE



WEST FACADE: TYPICAL
THIRD STORY WINDOW



WEST FACADE: DETAIL OF CORNICE

Lot 10 (Sublot 820 and Southern Part of 36)
417, 419 Seventh Street

Lot 10 as originally platted measured 50 feet along its Seventh Street side and close to 120 feet along its east-west axis. The southern half of the lot was later designated Sublot 820, and the northern part of the lot integrated with Lot 10 directly to the north. The two combined became Sublot 36 which is occupied by the International Order of Odd Fellows Temple. For the purposes of clarification the northern part of Lot 10 will be included with the description of Lot 11. Please refer to the plat maps.

1819.....Lot 10 was assessed to Elizabeth Cox according to the Washington Tax Records.

1824.....The Washington Tax Books indicate that Lot 10 was assessed \$1406.00 in the name of Elizabeth Cox.

1844.....Elizabeth Cox's assessment rose to \$2445.00.

1858.....G.T. Smallwood, a cabinet and furniture maker was listed in the City Directories as an occupant of 417 Seventh Street.

1859.....The southern portion of Lot 10, or Sublot 820, was assessed \$5803.00 to Henry Thorn.

1862

to

1867.....George Kennedy, a grocer, occupied the building according to the City Directories.

1870.....Sublot 820 was assessed \$7000.00 in the name of Henry Thorn.

1873

to

1895.....The City Directories list Nathan T. Metzger, a grocer, as the occupant of 417 Seventh Street for a period of twenty-three years.

1878

to

1883.....George Breitbarth operated a furniture dealership according to the City Directories at 417 Seventh Street.

1878/79...Henry Thorn's assessment of Lot 820 rose to \$13,743.00.

1883/84...Henry Thorn's assessment remained at \$13,743.00.

1886.....A building permit dated September 26th was issued to allow the repair of one brick store by putting in two new show windows, and making other alterations to the storefront.

1893/94...Sublot 820 was assessed \$16,979.00 for the ground, in the name of Charles G. Thorn. The improvements to the property were valued at \$8000.00.

1899

to

1917.....The City Directories list the Mayer and Petit clothing store as the occupant of 417 Seventh Street during this time span.

1899/

1900.....The Washington Tax Records indicate that Sublot 820 was assessed \$16,797 for the value of the Lot and \$7000.00 for the improvements to the property.

1906.....A building permit was issued on May 28 to install a new tin roof on the show windows. The permit describes the building as a three story brick building with a flat roof (Permit No. 666½).

1906.....On September 21 of the same year, a permit was issued to install an I-Beam over the door and to brick up under the joists. The permit describes the building as an four story brick building with a tin roof (Permit No. 956).

1918.....A building permit was issued to 417 Seventh Street to make general alterations to the store and to build two show windows (Permit No. 2788; Architect: W. S. Plager; Builder: M. Gummick; Cost: \$5000.00).

1921

to

1923.....The City Directories lists Alpherker and Greenberg as operating a jewelry store at 417 Seventh Street.

1924

to

1948.....Kur took over the sole proprietorship of the jewelry store and managed it for an additional twenty-five years.

1935.....An April 19th building permit was issued to 417 Seventh Street which authorized the remodeling of the storefront, and the installation of the stairs leading to the second floor (Permit No. 183,443; Architect: W.S. Plager; Builder: M. Gimmic; Cost: \$5000.00).

On August 13th of the same year a permit was issued to install a flat show window on the front of the building (Permit No. 183,653; Architect: R.L. Weide; Builder: R.R. Fergusson; Cost: \$200.00).

1936.....On May 10 a permit was issued to repair the ceilings with plaster over a metal lath (Permit No. 285,312; Builder: Schelling-Busch; Cost: \$300.00).

1956

to

1966.....The Thom McAnn shoe store occupied the building according to the City Directories.

1967

to

1981.....The Irving's Camera photography store presently occupies the lot.

SOURCES

Baist Real Estate Atlas

Bastert and Enthoffer Plat Maps

Boyd's City Directories

District of Columbia Building Permits

District of Columbia General Assessment Records

District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds

District of Columbia Surveyor's Office Records

District of Columbia Tax Records

Hopkins Real Estate Atlas

Polk's City Directories

Property Map for Downtown Urban Renewal Area for District of Columbia Redevelopment
Land Agency

Sanborn Insurance Map